



United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Rawlins Field Office

P.O. Box 2407 (1300 North Third Street)

Rawlins, Wyoming 82301-2407



In Reply Refer To:

WYW-167155

2800 (WYD03)

Dear Reader:

Enclosed, please find the Proposed Resource Management Plan (RMP) Amendment/Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) (Volume 1) and the Chokecherry and Sierra Madre (CCSM) Wind Energy Project Final EIS (Volume II). Copies of the Proposed Plan Amendment/Final EIS and the CCSM Project EIS are also available for review at the following website:

<http://www.blm.gov/pgdata/content/wy/en/info/NEPA/documents/rfo/Chokecherry.html>,
or during normal business hours at the following Bureau of Land Management (BLM) offices:

- BLM Wyoming State Office, 5353 Yellowstone Road, Cheyenne, Wyoming
- BLM High Desert District Office, 280 Highway 191 N., Rock Springs, Wyoming
- BLM Rawlins Field Office, 1300 N. Third Street, Rawlins, Wyoming

The Proposed Plan Amendment/Final EIS and the CCSM Project Final EIS are being released for a 30-day public availability and protest period beginning on the date the Environmental Protection Agency publishes its Notice of Availability in the *Federal Register*. Subsequent to the 30-day public availability period, a Record of Decision (ROD) will be released that details the BLM's final decision as well as any required mitigation for the project.

Pursuant to the BLM's planning regulations at 43 CFR 1610.5-2, any person who participated in the planning process for this Proposed Plan Amendment and has an interest, which is or may be adversely affected by the planning decisions, may protest approval of the planning decisions in Volume I. For further information on filing a protest, please see the accompanying protest regulations in the pages that follow (labeled as Enclosure 1). The regulations specify the required elements of your protest. Take care to document all relevant facts. As much as possible, reference or cite the planning documents or available planning records (i.e., meeting minutes or summaries, correspondence, etc.).

E-mailed and faxed protests will not be accepted as valid protests, unless the protesting party also provides the original letter by either regular or overnight mail postmarked by the close of the protest period. Under these conditions, the BLM will consider the e-mailed or faxed protest as an advance copy and will afford it full consideration. If you wish to provide the BLM with such advance notification, please direct faxed protests to the attention of Brenda Hudgens-Williams, the BLM Protest Coordinator, at (202) 452-5112, and e-mailed protests to bhudgens@blm.gov.

All protests, including the follow-up letter to e-mails or faxes, must be in writing and mailed to one of the following addresses:

Regular Mail:

Director (210)
Attn: Brenda Hudgens-Williams
P.O. Box 71383
Washington, D.C. 20024-1383

Overnight Mail:

Director (210)
Attn: Brenda Hudgens-Williams
20 M Street SE, Room 2134LM
Washington, D.C. 20003

Before including your address, telephone number, e-mail address, or other personal identifying information in your protest, you should be aware that your entire protest, including your personal identifying information, may be made available to the public at any time. While you may ask the BLM in your protest to withhold your personal identifying information from public review, the BLM cannot guarantee that the BLM will be able to do so.

The BLM Director will make every attempt to promptly render a decision on each protest. The decision will be in writing and will be sent to the protesting party by certified mail, return receipt requested. The decision of the BLM Director shall be the final decision of the Department of the Interior. Responses to protest issues will be compiled and formalized in a Director's Protest Decision Report made available following issuance of the decision.

Upon resolution of all land use plan protests, the BLM will issue an Approved Plan Amendment and ROD. The Approved Plan Amendment and ROD will be mailed or made available electronically to all who participated in the planning process and will be available to all parties through the "Planning" page of the BLM national website (<http://www.blm.gov/planning>).

The Proposed Plan Amendment/Final EIS and the CCSM Project Final EIS were prepared pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the Federal Land Management and Policy Act, and other regulations and statutes. The BLM prepared the Proposed Plan Amendment/Final EIS and the CCSM Project Final EIS in consultation with cooperating agencies, taking into account public comments received to-date. The Proposed Plan Amendment/Final EIS is largely based on Alternative 4, the preferred alternative in the Draft EIS, with modifications to include more protective Visual Resource Management (VRM) classifications surrounding Elk Mountain and less protective VRM classifications along the North Platte River that coincide with the Interstate-80 utility corridors. The BLM's Preferred Alternative for the CCSM Project is largely based on Alternative 1R, the applicant's proposed

alternative in the Draft EIS, with modifications to prohibit development on 1037 acres in the area where the Red-Rim Grizzly Wildlife Habitat Management Area overlaps with the Sierra Madre portion of the project. The Proposed Plan Amendment/Final EIS and the CCSM Project Final EIS are not decision documents.

The CCSM Project Final EIS was prepared to analyze the potential impacts of constructing and operating a wind energy project south of Rawlins in Carbon County, Wyoming, as proposed by the Power Company of Wyoming, LLC. Through the NEPA process, the BLM will determine whether the Application Area is suitable for the development of the proposed project or for an alternative development plan. The impact analysis is based on resource-specific assumptions, estimated project disturbance, and appropriate project-specific stipulations. The decision the BLM will make as a result of the analysis, is whether or not to authorize the development, operation, maintenance, and reclamation of a wind energy project on public lands, and if approved, under what terms and conditions. A plan amendment is required as a prerequisite to the approval of the CCSM project. With the exception of VRM classes, wind energy development within and adjacent to the CCSM project conforms to the Rawlins RMP.

The Draft Plan Amendment/Draft EIS and the CCSM Project Draft EIS were published on July 22, 2011, to initiate the 90-day public comment period, which concluded on October 19, 2011. Two public meetings were held in Rawlins and Saratoga, Wyoming, during the Draft EIS comment period. A summary of the written comments received during the public review period for the two Draft EISs, and the responses to the comments are provided in Appendix M.

If you have any questions concerning the document, or to request a copy of the document, please contact Pamela Murdock, Project Manager, at pmurdock@blm.gov, or telephone (307) 775-6259.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D.J. Carpenter". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

Dennis J. Carpenter
Field Manager

Enclosures